

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BLANTY 01330 191843Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 H-03 DRC-01 RSC-01

/031 W

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R 191430Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6513

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPRS, MI (HIGGENBOTHAM, F.P.)

SUBJ: HIGGENBOTHAM/CHURCH OF CHRIST PROPERTY

REFS: A. STATE 167106 B. STATE 184691

1. UPON RECEIPT REF A, EMBASSY GOT IN TOUCH WITH SHELBURNE'S ATTORNEY (MICHAEL BLACKWOOD, HEAD OF LAW FIRM WILSON AND MORGAN, MEMBER OF MALAWI PARLIAMENT, AND WELL KNOWN LOCAL FIGURE). BLACKWOOD POINTED OUT PROBLEM IS NOT ONE IN WHICH LEGAL REMEDIES AVAILABLE - I.E., NO DECLARATION OF FORFEITURE AGAINST WHICH TO PROCEED. HOWEVER BLACKWOOD AGREED DISCUSS WITH MINISTER CHIWANDA GAMA PERSONALLY AND DID SO ON SEPT 2 AND 17. EMBASSY INFORMED BY BLACKWOOD SEPT 18 HE EXPECTS REPLY FROM MINISTER AND HOPEFULLY DECISION ON DISPOSAL HIGGENBOTHAM PROPERTY IN COURSE OF COMING WEEK.

2. BLACKWOOD'S EFFORTS DIRECTED MAINLY TOWARD RELEASE OF HIGGENBOTHAM PERSONAL PROPERTY RATHER THAN CHURCH OF CHRIST PROPERTY. WE INFORMED MALAWIAN FORMER EMPLOYEES OF CHURCH OF CHRIST ARE RAISING CLAIMS AGAINST LATTER, WHICH MAY IMPEDE RELEASE. THESE MALAWIANS NOW CLAIM THEY REPRESENT CHURCH OF CHRIST.

3. REVEREND HIGGENBOTHAM HAS WRITTEN DIRECTLY TO MINISTER ASKING APPROVAL OF SALE OF HIGGENBOTHAM'S PERSONAL VEHICLE WHICH, BY MINISTER'S ORDER, HAS REMAINED UNSOLD ON LOCAL
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PAGE 02 BLANTY 01330 191843Z

LOT SINCE MAY. FREQUENT ABSENCES FROM BLANTYRE OF KEY GOM

FIGURES INCLUDING MINISTER CHIWANDA ACCOMPANYING PRESIDENT BANDA ON NORTHERN TOUR AND RECENT PARTY CONFERENCE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO DELAY.

4. EMBASSY HAS KEPT GOM EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ADVISED.
BURDETT

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